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For country consultation*

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

GUIDELINES FOR CONSIGNMENTS IN TRANSIT

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INTRODUCTION

SCOPE

This standard describes procedures to identify, assess and manage phytosanitary risks associated with consignments of regulated articles passing through but not destined for the territory of a country, in such manner that any phytosanitary measures applied in the country of transit are technically justified and necessary to prevent the introduction into and/or spread of pests within that country.

REFERENCES

Glossary of phytosanitary terms, 2004. ISPM No. 5, FAO, Rome.
Guidelines for pest risk analysis, 1996. ISPM No. 2, FAO, Rome.
Guidelines for phytosanitary certificates, 2002. ISPM No. 12, FAO, Rome.
International Plant Protection Convention, 1997. FAO, Rome.
Pest reporting, 2002. ISPM No. 17, FAO, Rome.

DEFINITIONS

At its Seventh session in April 2005, the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures adopted recommendations on the publication of ISPMs in a book format (see ICPM-7 report, paragraph 39 and Appendix II). Each book of ISPMs will contain a glossary chapter, i.e. the *Glossary of phytosanitary terms* (ISPM No. 5) in the relevant language.

The "definitions" section in the present ISPM, once integrated into the book, will not contain any definitions but will refer to the Glossary chapter of the book (ISPM No. 5). However, for the purpose of country consultation, this section contains terms or definitions which are new or revised in the present draft standard. Once this standard has been adopted, the new and revised terms and definitions will be transferred into the Glossary chapter of the book (ISPM No. 5), and will not appear in the standard itself.

Revised definition :

consignment in transit

A consignment passing through but not destined for the territory of a country and that is subject to appropriate official procedures.

OUTLINE OF REQUIREMENTS

International trade may involve the movement of consignments of regulated articles passing through but not destined for the territory of a country, under Customs control. Such movements may present a phytosanitary risk to the country of transit. Contracting parties to the IPPC may apply measures to consignments in transit through their territories, provided that the measures are technically justified and necessary to prevent the introduction and/or spread of pests (Article VII.4 of the IPPC, 1997).

This standard provides guidelines by which the NPPO of the country of transit may decide which movements require intervention of the NPPO, and subjected to phytosanitary measures, and if so, the type of phytosanitary measures. For those cases the responsibilities and elements of the transit system are described, together with the needs for cooperation and communication, non-discrimination, review and documentation.

BACKGROUND

Consignments in transit and their conveyances are included within the scope of the IPPC in Article VII and in Article I. Article VII.4. states:

“Contracting parties may apply measures specified in this Article to consignments in transit through their territories only where such measures are technically justified and necessary to prevent the introduction and/or spread of pests”.

Article I.4 states:

“Where appropriate, the provisions of this Convention may be deemed by contracting parties to extend, in addition to plants and plant products, to storage places, packaging, conveyances, containers, soil and any other organism, object or material capable of harbouring or spreading plant pests, particularly where international transportation is involved”.

Transit involves the movement of consignments of regulated articles passing through but not destined for the territory of a country (further referred to as country of transit).

Consignments in transit may pass through the country remaining enclosed, without being split up or combined with other consignments, and without having their packaging changed. Under such conditions, the movement of consignments will in many cases not present a phytosanitary risk and will not require phytosanitary measures, especially if the consignments are transported in containers¹.

Consignments and their conveyances passing through a country in transit may, however, also be transported or dealt with in such a manner that they do present a phytosanitary risk. This may for instance be the case when consignments are transported open rather than enclosed, or when they do not pass directly through the country but are held for a period of storage, or are split up, combined or repackaged, particularly if the type of transport changes (e.g. from ship to railway). In such cases, phytosanitary measures may be applied in the country of transit to prevent introduction of pests into, and/or their spread within, that country.

It should be noted that transit is not only a phytosanitary procedure but also an administrative one, which is used as Customs procedures where goods are transported under Customs control. Customs control may include document verification, tracking (e.g. electronic), sealing, control of carrier and entry/exit control. Customs control by itself does not always guarantee phytosanitary integrity and security of consignment and thus will not necessarily offer protection against introduction or spread of pests.

Cooperation among NPPOs and Customs is essential to establish and/or maintain an effective transit system and identify consignments of regulated articles in transit. Specific agreement with Customs may be needed for the NPPO to be informed of and have access to consignments under Customs control.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Risk Analysis for the Country of Transit

1.1 Risk identification

To identify potential phytosanitary risk related to consignments in transit, the NPPO of the country of transit (from this point onwards the NPPO) should collect and review information.

Elements of such information may include:

- procedures applied by customs and other relevant services
- classes of commodities or consignments of regulated articles in transit
- means and methods of transport for consignments in transit
- regulated pests associated with the consignments in transit
- host distribution in transit route
- possibilities of escape of pests from consignments
- existing phytosanitary measures for consignments of commodities in transit
- types of packaging and conditioning
- conditions of transport (refrigeration, modified atmosphere, etc.).

² I.e. a standard transport container as used in ocean going trade.

The NPPO may decide that consignments in transit that pose no potential phytosanitary risk may move or continue to move without phytosanitary measures. This is for instance the case when no pests regulated by the country of transit are associated with the consignments in transit or when pests cannot escape from the consignment in transit.

If potential phytosanitary risks are identified, risk assessment for consignments in transit may be needed, in order to identify the necessity and technical justification of any phytosanitary measure.

Only those phytosanitary risks which concern pests already regulated by the country of transit or those pests that are under emergency action will normally be considered.

1.2 Risk assessment

Consignments in transit constitute a potential pathway for the introduction and/or spread of pests. An assessment of the phytosanitary risk associated with transit should normally focus only on evaluating the probability of pests being introduced or spread from consignments in transit. The associated potential economic consequences should have been evaluated in the case of a regulated pest and therefore should not need to be repeated.

Guidance to the assessment of probability of introduction and spread of a pest is provided in ISPM No. 11 (*Pest risk analysis for quarantine pests, including analysis of environmental risks and living modified organisms*) in particular section 2.2. For consignments in transit, the following information may also be relevant:

- pathways for introduction and spread of regulated pests from the consignments in transit
- dispersal mechanism and mobility of the relevant pests
- transport means (truck, rail, aeroplane, ship) and mode of transport (closed, sealed, refrigerated, etc.)
- packaging mode
- changes of configuration (combined, split, repacked)
- duration of transit or storage, and storage conditions
- route taken by the consignment prior to and within country of transit
- frequency, volume and season of transit

Based on risk assessment, consignments in transit may be classified into two broad categories:

- requiring NPPO intervention, or
- to be handled by Customs control only.

Phytosanitary measures for consignments in transit can only be applied for pests regulated in the country of transit or those pests that are under emergency action.

1.3 Risk management

The NPPO, through risk assessment, determines how a consignment will move.

1.3.1 Transit under Customs control only

The NPPO, through risk assessment, may determine that the Customs control alone is adequate. If this is the case, the NPPO does not need to apply any phytosanitary measures in addition to Customs control.

1.3.2 Transit with phytosanitary measures in addition to Customs control

If the risk assessment for consignments in transit concludes that Customs control alone is insufficient, the NPPO may determine that phytosanitary measures are necessary. These may include for example requirements for:

- commodity verification
- phytosanitary transit permits
- phytosanitary certificate (with transit requirements)
- designated entry and exit points
- verification of exit

- designated transit routes
- NPPO prescribed equipment or facilities
- Customs facilities designated by the NPPO
- phytosanitary treatments
- consignment tracking while in transit
- physical conditions (refrigeration, pest-proof packaging and/or conveyance)
- NPPO specific seals
- specific carrier's emergency management plans
- transit time or season limits
- documentation in addition to that required by Customs
- inspection of consignment by NPPO.

1.3.3 Other phytosanitary measures

When appropriate phytosanitary measures for consignments in transit are not available or are impossible to apply, the NPPO may require that such consignments are subjected to import requirements which may include prohibition.

If consignments under transit procedures are stored or repackaged in such a way that they present a phytosanitary risk, the NPPO may decide that the consignments should meet import requirements, or subject them to other appropriate phytosanitary measures.

2. Responsibilities of the Contracting Party

The contracting party may develop a transit system for phytosanitary control of consignments in transit with the NPPO and Customs authorities as collaborators. This transit system should ensure that prescribed phytosanitary measures are applied. The transit system is operated by the Customs and NPPO in cooperation as appropriate.

The NPPO has phytosanitary responsibility for the transit system and establishes and implements phytosanitary measures necessary to manage phytosanitary risks, taking into account transit procedures of Customs.

3. Measures for Non-compliance and Emergency Situations

The transit system should include measures for non-compliance or emergency situations, established by the NPPO, in case of accidents in the country of transit (for example unexpected escape of regulated pest from consignment moving in transit) or in cases of non-compliance.

4. Cooperation and Communication

The NPPO may establish cooperation with Customs and other authorities involved in transit and maintain communication with all stakeholders involved in transit.

5. Minimal Impact

Consignments in transit should not be subject to more restrictive measures than those applied to consignments of the same phytosanitary status imported into that country of transit.

6. Review

The NPPO should, as necessary, review the transit system, the types of consignments in transit and the associated phytosanitary risks, in cooperation with appropriate authorities and parties. It should make adjustments as appropriate.

7. Documentation

The transit system should be adequately described and documented and this information should be made available to other countries and interested parties on request.